

# Habitat Project Proposal

**Proposal Title:** Billies Mountain Habitat Improvement Project

**Proposal Number:** 1049

**DWR Region:** Central Region

**Lead Agency:** USFS

**County:** Utah

**Project Manager:** Lance Stavast

**PM Phone:** 8014915653

**Regional Priority:** Within Focus Area

**Project Type:** Terrestrial Habitat

**Proposed Start Date:** 07/01/2007

**Project Location:** Utah county just east of the Billies mountain pass on the Uinta National Forest.

**Project Description:** Improve approximately 1,000 acres of big game winter range and turkey habitat with bullhog and lop & scatter treatments

**Description of Problem/Need:** Hazardous fuels have been building up over the years on Forest System Lands due to active fire suppression by the Forest Service. The Oak/Maple community in the Billies mountain area is full of mature and decadent oak and maple. These mature/decadent oak and maple increase the risk of catastrophic wildfire. There are large areas of continuous oak and maple. This treatment would help to increase age class diversity and structural diversity of the oak and maple and reduce the hazardous fuels build up. In some areas juniper trees are encroaching into the oak/maple community and reducing the understory herbaceous vegetation.

Single age class and structural diversity is not beneficial for wildlife habitat for such species as mule deer, elk and turkeys. This area is big game winter range and fawning area for mule deer. There are a number of illegal user created roads/trails in the area reducing the effectiveness of the habitat for wildlife.

Roads in the area are native surface roads. These roads are easily degraded through improper seasonal use.

The fire regime has been moderately altered, meaning fire frequencies may have increased or decreased by one or more return intervals causing moderate changes in fire behavior and vegetation structure. This area has been listed as a high to extreme fire risk area in a statewide BLM fire risk assessment.

**Objectives:** Improve wildlife habitat by creating openings in oak and maple clones. Reduce competition of juniper and pinyon trees. Improve the heraceous understory. Eliminate unauthorized roads and access. Improve water quantity and quality by protecting springs from livestock grazing and repairing guzzlers.

**Relevance to Strategic Plans:** The project area occurs within the sagebrush steppe and mountain shrub types which are key habitats identified in the WAP. This area supports mule deer (Tier III) Bald eagles (I) black-throated gray warbler (III) Broad-tailed hummingbird (III) and numerous other species of concern (Tier III) also inhabit the area including neotropical birds and raptors.

The proposed treatments lie within Central Region UPCD focus areas.

The proposed projects will address some of the habitat management strategies outlined in the deer and elk management plan for Wildlife Management Unit 17, Wasatch Mountains including: continue to restore and improve sagebrush steppe habitats critical to deer according to DWR's Habitat Initiative; cooperate with federal land management agencies and private landowners in carrying out habitat improvements such as reseedings, controlled burns, water developments etc. on public and private lands; and maintain and/or enhance forage production through direct range improvements throughout the unit to achieve population management objectives.

The proposed projects will address the following goals and objectives of the Division of Wildlife Resources most recent strategic management plan:

Resource Goal: expand wildlife populations and conserve sensitive species by protecting and improving wildlife habitat.

Objective 1: protect existing wildlife habitat and improve 500,000 acres of critical habitats and watersheds throughout the state by 2010.

Objective 3: conserve sensitive species to prevent them from becoming listed as threatened or endangered.

Constituency Goal: Achieve broad-based support for Division programs and budgets by demonstrating the value of wildlife to all citizens of Utah.

Objective 2: improve communication with wildlife organizations, public officials, private landowners, and government agencies to obtain support for Division programs.

Uinta National Forest 2003 Land and Resource Management Plan

FW-Goal-1 Soil, air, and water resources provide for watershed health, public health and safety, long-term soil productivity, and ecosystem sustainability, and meet applicable laws and regulations.

FW-Goal-2 Biologically diverse, sustainable ecosystems maintain or enhance habitats for native flora and fauna, forest and rangeland health, watershed health, and water quality.

Sub-goal-2-1(G-2-1) The fuel management aspect of the fire management program is emphasized through application of hazard reduction activities.

Sub-goal-2-8(G-2-8) Ecosystem resilience is maintained by providing for a full range of seral stages and age classes (by cover type) that achieve a mosaic of habitat conditions and diversity to meet a variety of desired resource management objectives. Recruitment and sustainability of some early seral species and vegetation communities in the landscape are necessary to maintain ecosystem resilience to perturbations.

Sub-goal-2-10(G-2-10) Management actions maintain ecosystem health and encourage conditions that are within the historic range of variation. Management actions remain within the variability of size, intensity, and frequency of native disturbance regimes characteristic of the subject landscape and ecological processes.

Sub-goal-2-11(G-2-11) Key shrubs and/or trees are maintained to a level that allows adequate recruitment to maintain or recover the

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woody component. Specifically, the Forest is managed for more plants in the combined sprout and young categories than in the combined mature and dead categories.

Sub-goal-2-23(G-2-23) Areas identified as being of special concern for habitat such as big game winter range, big game natal areas, Canada lynx denning areas, and greater sage grouse breeding areas in the Vernon and Strawberry Reservoir Management Areas are maintained and, where potential exists, improved or expanded. Disturbances in these areas are limited during critical periods for wildlife.

Sub-goal-2-24(G-2-24) Adequate amounts and distribution of big game hiding and thermal cover are maintained. Adequate amounts of hiding cover for wildlife is retained around created openings and along roads where vegetative management activities are implemented.

Sub-goal-2-25(G-2-25) Maintain stable and upward conditions in big game winter range habitats and improve downward trend sites.

Objective-2-5(O-2-5) By 2013, accomplish at least 30,000 acres of vegetative treatments (combined total for all purposes).

Objective-2-17(O-2-17) By 2018, complete 1,000 acres of big game winter range habitat improvements to reach desired future conditions.

Sub-goal-8-4(G-8-4) Non-beneficial and/or unauthorized roads and trails are decommissioned, obliterated, or rehabilitated if they do not meet resource objectives or provide necessary access to facilities or inholdings.

**Potential Risks:** failure to keep closed roads from being used by offroad vehicles. Failure of seeded plants to establish. Short term increase in hazardous fuels from downed juniper trees.

**Proposed Methods:** Use a bullhog to create openings and corridors in approximately 900 acres of decadant oak and maple communities. Utilize hand crews to lop & scatter about 90 acres of sage-steppe with invading small juniper trees. Reclaim over 6 miles of unauthorized roads by ripping and seeding. Gates and signs will be used to keep closed roads from being used. Utilize volunteers to rebuild fences around springs.

**Shapefile Name:** billies\_mtn\_bullhog, lop&scatter, road\_closure

**Seed Source:** GBRC

**UPCD Reg Team Coord Date:** 11/13/2007

**Proposed  
NEPA Action:**

**Proposed  
Arch Action:**

☒ **Vegetation Monitoring**    ☐ **Wildlife Monitoring**

**Monitoring Details:** Photo points will be established. One Range Trend study will established in the project area.

**Cons. Outreach  
Details:**

## SPECIES BENEFITING

Elk	Rio Grande Wild Turkey	Bald Eagle	Black-throated Gray V
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	Virginia's Warbler	Mule Deer	

## LAND OWNERSHIP

Owner	Acres
USFS	1000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000</b>

## PROPOSED FUNDING

Source	Amount Requested	Date Approved	Amount Approved
Volunteers	\$3,500.00		\$0.00
Rocky Mtn. Power	\$8,000.00		\$0.00
DNR Watershed (FY09)	\$10,000.00		\$0.00
USFS	\$296,500.00		\$0.00

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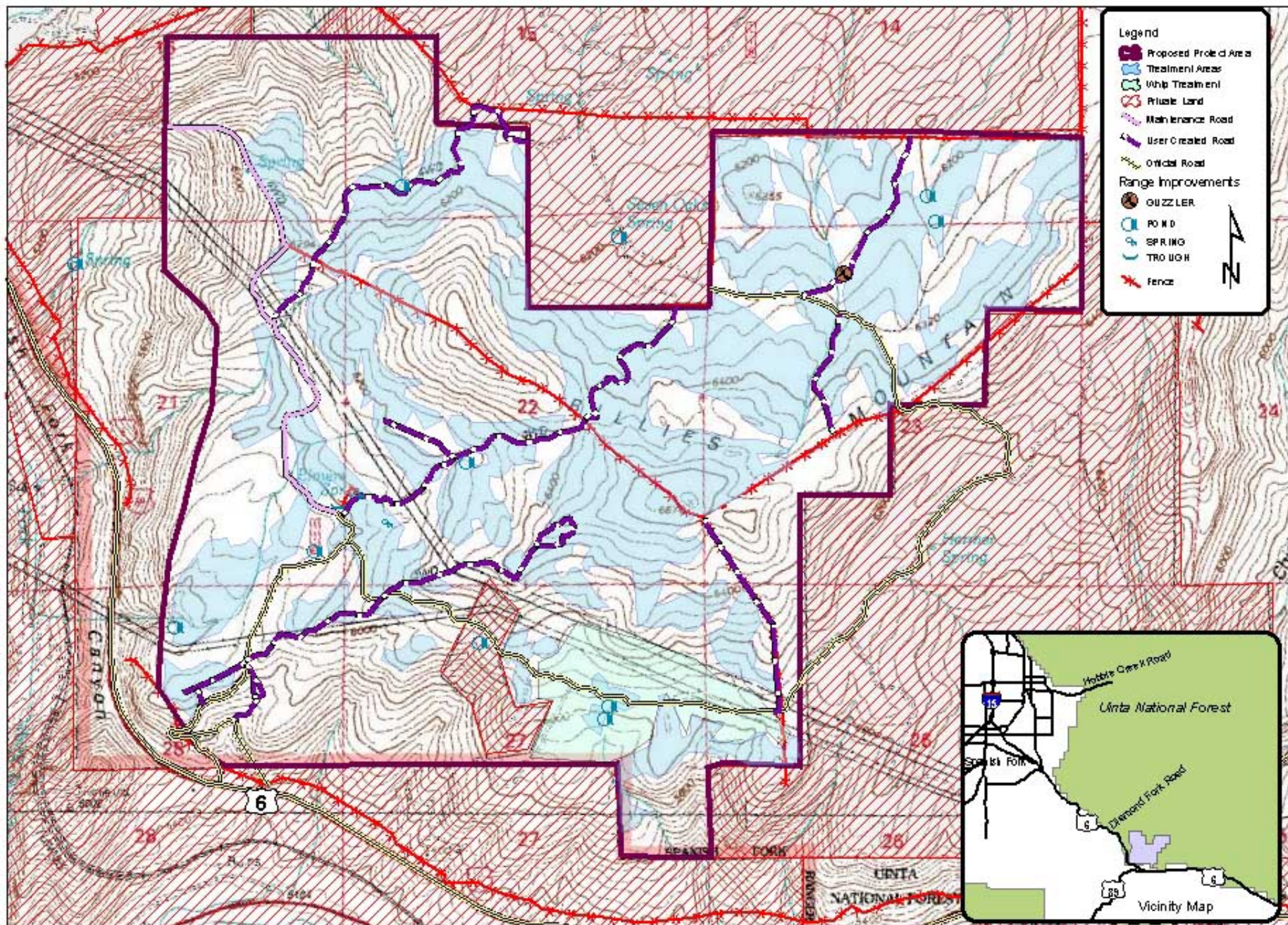
USFS	\$25,000.00	\$0.00
Habitat Acct 174	\$4,000.00	\$0.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$347,000.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

## PROPOSED BUDGET

Item	Description	DWR Account	In Kind/ Partner Contrib.
NEPA	NEPA clearance for project area	\$0.00	\$25,000.00
Contractual Services	Bullhog 880 acres @ \$341/acre	\$0.00	\$300,000.00
Contractual Services	Lop & scatter 90 acres @ \$50/acre	\$4,500.00	\$0.00
Equipment Rental	Bulldozder to rip roads	\$4,000.00	\$0.00
Seed (GBRC)	500 lbs of seed @ \$5/lb	\$2,500.00	\$0.00
Materials and Supplies	Road barricades	\$0.00	\$8,000.00
Materials and Supplies	Signs	\$500.00	\$0.00
Personal Services	Rebuild fences around springs with volunteers		\$3,500.00
Personal Services	Repair and reinstall guzzler	\$1,500.00	\$0.00
Materials and Supplies	Materials for 1,000 ft of barb wire fence	\$1,000.00	\$0.00
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$14,000.00</b>	<b>\$336,500.00</b>

## Project Map:





## Proposed Billies Mountain Mechanical Treatment